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## **Agencies Unite to Increase Economic Opportunities for Minority-Owned Businesses**

**WASHINGTON (March 19, 2015)** —The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and CEO Connection have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at helping U.S. minority CEOs grow through enhanced access to resources and economic opportunities.

MBDA maintains a national network of 44 Business Centers equipped with specialists that help the nation’s minority-owned firms grow through access to capital, contracts, and markets. CEO Connection supports the success of mid-market CEOs by enabling them to build mutually beneficial relationships with peers and functional experts, and connecting CEOs to information and resources to which they may not otherwise have access.

“Through this MOU, we are providing an opportunity for minority CEOs to operate on an even playing field in accessing opportunities to lead to their businesses’ growth and sustainability,” said MBDA National Director Alejandra Castillo. “This is critical as we experience the demographic shift taking place in America, and the increasing importance of diverse CEOs to our nation’s economy.”

The agreement provides minority CEOs of mid-market companies a greater awareness of the services and resources offered by CEO Connection. Membership in CEO Connection can provide MBDA clients with contacts that can help with their business growth and competitiveness. In addition, through this MOU, CEO Connection will refer MBEs to MBDA for technical assistance and business opportunities.

“This relationship is the quintessential example of the benefits of private businesses working with government to support the greater good,” said Kenneth Beck, Chief Executive Officer of CEO Connection. “We are thrilled that MBDA and the entire Department of Commerce recognize the need for resources to support Mid-Market Companies and we are honored to help.”

Together, MBDA and CEO Connection will leverage each other’s capabilities to develop creative and innovative approaches for promoting the overall success of minority CEOs and firms.

***About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)***

MBDA, [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov), is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale and capacity through access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda).

**About CEO Connection**

CEO Connection ([www.ceoconnection.com](http://www.ceoconnection.com)) is the ONLY membership organization in the world reserved exclusively for CEOs of mid-market companies – companies with between \$100 million and \$3 billion in annual revenue. Our mission is to help mid-market CEOs succeed. We accomplish this by enabling CEOs to build mutually beneficial relationships with peers and functional experts; connecting CEOs to people, information and resources to which they would otherwise not have access; and promoting the interests, welfare, and points of view of the membership and the mid-market.

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